

STUDENTS' AFTERNOON AT THE P.N.E.U. CONFERENCE.

JULY 4TH, 1916.

A veritable feast of good things awaited us on the afternoon of Tuesday, the opening day of the P.N.E.U. Conference, and all thanks are due to Miss Parish for arranging such a delightful programme for us. We found ourselves most delightfully placed at Bedford College, and the President had kindly invited us to use the grounds whenever we chose, a privilege that was much appreciated. The meetings were held in a spacious hall, and the quietness that reigned outside added much to the pleasure of the meetings. But to return to Tuesday afternoon. About thirty students were there, as well as a goodly gathering of others who were attending the Conference. Miss Rankin gave us many useful hints as to the preparation of boys for Preparatory Schools, and Miss Davidson was strong in her defence of fairy tales in furthering the children's education, but as these papers will be reported independently, I need not refer to them at greater length, except to say that it always fills me with pride to see one's fellow-students taking active part in these Annual Conferences of the P.N.E.U., and one is glad to feel that somehow they belong specially to us.

Then we had a real treat, for Mr. de Burgh came from Reading specially to talk to us about the teaching of Greek and Roman history. He kept us all enthralled for an hour, whilst he outlined a scheme of lectures on universal history which he thought would be advisable to give to girls at the end of their school course before entering upon college life or before specializing in any particular branch of the subject. He said that in the ordinary school curriculum, history teaching was almost bound to be more or less departmental and cut up into sections, and that it would be good to take

a broad survey that would link up all the various sections into one great whole. His own enthusiasm spread to his audience, and one and all felt that we should love to attend such a course as given by him. But here again I must not poach on other people's preserves.

It was a delightful thought on the part of Miss Parish to put Mrs. Esslemont in the chair, and there again we felt proud to think that she also was a student. She presided over the meeting just as we knew she would and voiced our feelings in a very graceful way. After tea in the College Dining Hall, where even the sparrows seemed at home, we adjourned to a classroom upstairs to talk. Miss Kitching pleaded once more on behalf of the Scale How Mission Fund, and then, as no one else seemed to have any special point to raise, we adjourned to the grounds as we felt rather cramped amongst all the desks.

And, before I close, may I apologize for letting students separate without offering our very best thanks to Miss Parish for all her many labours on our behalf; of course the gratitude was there, but it ought to have been expressed and I blame myself very much for the omission. Will she accept this apology in the spirit in which it is made and still continue to think kindly of us, and know that we are not really ungrateful or unappreciative?

I think the following is a fairly correct list of students who were present during the afternoon:—Mrs. Esslemont, Mrs. Brittlebank, Mrs. le Brun, and the Misses Beddow, Bernau, Claxton, Davidson, Flewker, Fountain, Glascot, V. Good, M. Good, Gray, Haggie, Heath, Humfrey, Kitching, Lambert, Lobjoit, MacSheehy, Norris, Parish, Pennethorne, Phillips, Channing Pearce, Robotham, Ruston, Smeeton, Willis, J. and M. Wilkinson and Young.

LILIAN GRAY.

FAIRY STORIES AS A HELP OR HINDRANCE IN EDUCATION.

We all hoped that an interesting discussion would have followed Miss Davidson's paper, but, unfortunately, time did not allow. Many of us, if not all, would have dealt with the subject in a similar way, giving emphasis to the fact that fairy stories prove a great asset in the education of every child. The opposite view, proving them to be a hindrance rather than a help, would have been interesting, if not convincing. The paper will be reproduced verbatim in the Conference number of the *Parents' Review*, so that all will have the opportunity of reading it there.

REPORT OF PAPER BY MISS RANKIN.

JULY 4TH, 1916.

[May I say at the outset that I did not listen to this paper with any idea of reporting it, but the Editor called upon me and I could not say "No."]

Miss Rankin's paper dealt with the preparation of little boys for a preparatory school, and gave us many useful hints and suggestions gathered from her own experiences spreading over many years. She took the boy from the age of seven, the time when the second teeth come and the "baby boy" is a thing of the past and the "little boy" comes into being. She laid stress on the importance of letting him live as much as possible in an even, sunny atmosphere, free from nervous strain or shock, giving both body and mind a fair chance to develop naturally and evenly. Let him learn to love nature and teach him reverence and veneration, which is more easily done at this early stage than later on. The P.U.S. programme can be followed to a large extent, but Miss Rankin advocated replacing some of the narration by

writing, as that would be a great asset to him when he went to school. She advised that ease in writing should be aimed at, without undue stress being laid on neatness, though this should be hinted at as being desirable. Fluent reading was also required at school age, and the boy should know his tables. Given these three, he should be able to hold his own. Miss Rankin was also insistent on the boy's social side being developed, so that he would take naturally to the companionship of his schoolfellows. Acting is a great help in this direction, as it does away with self-consciousness and also strengthens the memory and the power of self-expression. Let him dabble in colour, and do not be too critical if the results are crude at first. Give him as varied a curriculum as possible, always bearing in mind the three essentials, and even if some of the subjects have to be dropped for a while they will have helped to give him a good start. Above all, don't be discouraged if one's labours appear to be in vain; it is not always the cleverest boy who makes the cleverest man, or the man best fitted to make his way in life.

THE TEACHING OF GREEK AND ROMAN HISTORY.

By MR. W. G. DE BURGH, M.A.

Mr. de Burgh gave us a delightfully refreshing and inspiring talk on this subject—one which should make a great difference to our treatment of his *Legacy of Greece and Rome* as a text-book.

He told us, in the first place, that he wished to advocate a course of lectures on Universal History, which might be given with advantage to boys and girls during the year before leaving school. So much attention, he said, is paid to the separate departments of this subject, that the pupils

do not grasp the unity of history, whereas, if they took this course, they would be better able to interpret whatever aspect of history they might take up later, either at college or at home. This course, therefore, should touch, not merely on political history, but also on religion, art, literature and social life. The history of the world up to A.D. 800 might form one division of this course, and this need not take more than twenty-five lectures, but it should treat in detail some special aspects of the history of the world.

As a full account of the lecture will probably appear in the *Parents' Review*, I will only sketch, in mere outline, the four divisions of the scheme Mr. de Burgh suggested for this course.

The first, dealing with the early civilization of Egypt, Babylonia, Syria, Canaan and Crete, could be got into four lectures, and one would naturally select what is most typical, characteristic and interesting in each. For instance, the civilization of Egypt is mainly artistic, while that of Babylonia is literary and commercial.

The second division would deal with Greece, and here again, in eight or ten lessons, one would confine oneself to what is really important in the work of the Greek race. Chapters III and IV in *The Legacy of Greece and Rome* give us our main points for this division of the course.

The third division would take the Roman Republic up to the time of Julius Cæsar. There need only be four lectures on this period, and they would deal with the Rise of Rome, Roman Law and Order, the Conquest of the West (in which Hannibal is the chief source of interest), Roman Hellenism and the Fall of the Republic.

The fourth division would deal, in eight or ten lectures, with the Empire. The essential point here is that the pupils should be intimate with Roman life in the time of the empire,

and for this purpose they should visit Roman remains and should see pictures illustrating Roman life. In treating the Rise of Christianity, and in order to show the difference between pagan and Christian ideals, one would read passages from *Marcus Aurelius*, and compare them with the teachings of the New Testament.

Mr. de Burgh ended his lecture by giving us some hints on how this should be taught. To begin with, there should be a chronological chart of the outstanding features of the period, and of course the pupils should have their maps before them.

If the teacher is specially interested in any one aspect, let her enlarge on it to the neglect of another, since it is interest that matters most, both as regards teacher and pupils. Essays should be set, giving a choice of half a dozen subjects, and the pupils should work out in detail the one which appeals to them most.

For pictorial illustrations, slides may be obtained which treat both Greek and Roman history. Then there should be illustrations from *ancient* books, since the ancient historians wrote of the times in which they lived, and consequently their accounts are more interesting than those of modern writers, whose books should be seldom used in this connection.

The two great difficulties connected with the study of history—firstly, the difficulty of living in the remote past, and secondly, that of living the life of an alien people—may be overcome by showing how the life of Greece and Rome has influenced our own life, *i.e.*, in the words which have been handed down to us and which tell us of the character and life of the ancients, and by getting into direct contact with their life through relics of the past and through the books of ancient writers.